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ABSTRACT

The Accelerated Schools model attempts to restructure schools with high at-risk student populations and mainstream these students by the end of elementary school. A 6-year process of collaborative unity is used to identify challenge areas and move the school toward individualized solutions. The Accelerated Schools Satellite Center Project emerged in response to requests from schools seeking to develop accelerated programs and cooperate with universities. A Satellite Center is a school or college of education that prepares large numbers of teachers and administrators to work in schools with high percentages of at-risk students and contracts with Stanford University to become a center for accelerated schools in its own geographic area. Universities selected for the project were San Francisco State University, the University of New Orleans, California State University at Los Angeles, and Texas A & M University. Each Satellite Center selects and works closely with one pilot school serving as a model for others in the district. The faculty from model schools, together with Satellite Center personnel, provide training and technical assistance for schools being transformed into accelerated schools. Teachers and administrators undergoing university training are empowered to become change agents in their own schools. Satellite Centers are also expected to establish a collaborative research and development program advancing an understanding of accelerated theory and applications. Challenges and future directions are discussed. (13 references) (MLH)

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Accelerated Schools - The Satellite Center Project

Presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, April 3, 1991

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by

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Introduction

The Accelerated School model is a specific attempt to restructure schools with high concentrations of students in at-risk situations and to bring those students into the educational mainstream by the end of elementary school. The Accelerated Schools Process follows an integrated approach to the restructuring of schools in order to best meet the needs of all students. Instruction, curriculum, and organization are all impacted at the same time. This simultaneous approach is a central feature of Accelerated Schools. Schools are transformed according to three basic school-wide principles: unity of purpose, building on strengths, and school-site empowerment with responsibility. A process of collaborative inquiry is utilized to identify challenge areas and move the school toward solutions. It is expected that it will take a period of six years for a full transformation of a traditional school into an Accelerated School. (For a more complete description of the Accelerated Schools Process, see Levin, 1986, 1987, 1988, and Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991.)

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The first pilot Accelerated School was initiated midway through the 1986-87 school year in San Francisco. The second pilot school was begun in Redwood City, California, in the fall of 1987. In the fall of 1988, the state of Missouri coordinated the establishment of six pilot schools and expanded the effort to ten schools by the fall of 1990. The state of Illinois established an ambitious network of 25 schools at the onset of the 1989-90 school year. A pilot middle school was established in the fall of 1990 and there are several other schools around the country which are just beginning the process of acceleration. The process of acceleration is being accomplished in diverse ways that meet the needs of those involved. There is no one model of implementation which is prescribed by Stanford, but rather a philosophy and a process. As we learn from the successes and challenges of current projects, we revise and redesign our efforts accordingly.

This paper will explore the concept, design and implementation of one of the newest models for Accelerated Schools - that of the Satellite Center Project. This response to acceleration builds on the research on change and school-university collaboration in teacher education and educational innovation. A review of the literature focusses on the most relevant studies. We believe that this model - a collaborative effort between Stanford and four schools of education in major universities around the country - has the potential for effectively building capacity for the implementation and facilitation of new Accelerated Schools in many geographic regions. When used in conjunction with our existing models of

implementation, it should add to our ability to respond in a timely manner to the myriad of requests from schools for help in becoming Accelerated Schools. The review of the literature is followed by a description of the Satellite Center Project as it exists in the middle of its first full year of operation. Its strengths and challenges will be addressed.

Theoretical Background

The notion of collaboration between universities and schools is not a new one. In their review of the literature, Clift and Say (1988) found 58 articles relating to school-university collaboration in education. The majority of these articles described projects or advocated projects in collaboration, most of which were related to some aspect of teacher education. There were few articles which reported research or program evaluation of these projects. Most projects in collaboration dealt with field placement of teacher education students, with some addressing other issues such as curriculum or instructional change or school improvement programs. Most of these programs were university-initiated and managed and utilized a "top-down" approach to dissemination and action.

Hord (1986) found that definitions of collaboration varied from project to project. She made the distinction between cooperative efforts and collaborative efforts and set out several distinguishing characteristics of each and cautioned that the clarification of

expectations for participants was crucial in any collaborative endeavor.

The interest in school-university collaboration over the past decade in particular is evidenced by the numerous publications devoted to the topic. The 1985-86 issue of *Action in Teacher Education* was devoted to the description of various projects up and running around the country. Again in the Winter, 1988-89 issue, the theme was school-based teacher education. The theme of the 1989 American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Annual Meeting was "Collaboration: Building Common Educational Agendas." The resulting publication of the same name (Schwartz, 1990) summarizes the myriad array of collaborative projects between schools and universities across the country. Many of these consisted of descriptive material and were lacking in any research or evaluation base, or the inclusion of any criteria by which to measure their success, other than the fact that people "felt" they were working.

Of the numerous projects in collaborative teacher education, several involved a high degree of interaction between university and school-based teacher educators. Some programs, such as those at New Mexico State University and the University of Houston, utilized school-based faculty in the development of curriculum and field experiences and also provided for release time for classroom teachers to serve as adjunct university faculty in the university-based segment of the program. University faculty in these programs

spent a great deal of time in the schools performing in a number of roles. How much these programs actually transformed either the universities or the schools themselves has not been reported.

One unique collaborative research project was initiated at Stanford in 1981 (Atkin, Patrick, & Kennedy, 1989). This project, called the "Study of Stanford and the Schools," attempted to take a serious look at the relationship between the university and schools and their common aims and to work together in new ways which would be "research-oriented, data based, reflective - yet geared to action" (Atkin, et al, 1989, p. 6). While the study started out by looking at the reality of life in public secondary schools, it evolved into a study of the collaborative process itself between university and schools and resulted in an ongoing relationship between the two entities.

Lieberman (1986 a) advocated the idea of collaborative research through the inquiry process in which teachers would be empowered to define "the problem of their work" through a school-university structure which facilitated reflection and action. Tikunoff and Ward (1979) also encouraged classroom research that encouraged collaboration among teachers and university - based researchers. However, these efforts, when attempted, seldom had any lasting effect or improved practice in classrooms other than those being studied.

Oakes, et al (1986) discussed the nature of the collaborative paradigm as it applies to university-school collaboration. They suggest that Ward and Tikunoff (1982) have identified four common characteristics of collaborative research:

1. Researchers and school practitioners work together on all phases of the effort.
2. The collaborative effort is focused on "real world" as well as theoretical problems.
3. Both groups gain in understanding and mutual respect.
4. The effort is concerned with both research and development/implementation issues throughout (Ward and Tikunoff, 1982 as cited in Oakes, et al, 1986.)

Oakes and her colleagues looked at the process of collaborative inquiry as a vehicle which had the power to change the nature of research and development based on the input of the practitioner. Up until this point, no such reciprocal change seems to have occurred. Oakes proposed to build on the strengths of all involved in the endeavor and to design a program where all participants would be working toward a common goal. It was believed that this would decrease the likelihood of prior assumptions shaping the nature of the research questions to be examined. Research methodology would also be reformulated to include consensus-building and a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures to document the processes and the context of the project. Oakes goes on to describe a project she and her colleagues conducted using this approach and documents the challenges encountered as they broke new ground in terms of shared leadership and responsibility in a school culture which did not lend itself to collegiality or collaboration. The study makes interesting reading for all preparing to embark on similar ventures.

Sirotnik and Clark (1988) also offer the concept of schools as centers of inquiry. Rather than being targets of change, they would become centers of change where educators become actively involved in problem definition and reflection on potential solutions. Sirotnik believes that the only way change can be accomplished in any meaningful way is if the personal nature of knowledge is accepted and the decisions are made through the active engagement of practitioners in the process (Sirotnik & Clark, 1988, p.662).

More recent attempts at collaboration between universities and schools have come about as an outgrowth of recent calls for reform by the Holmes group (Holmes, 1990) and Goodlad's study of teachers and teacher education (Goodlad, 1990 a&b). The notion of the professional development school where university faculty and school-based teacher educators work together to develop and implement a powerful teacher training program which simultaneously renews the schools and the education of those who work in them (Goodlad, 1990 a, pp.192-193) is not yet tested in reality, although there are efforts to get such centers underway in several locations around the country. Goodlad's task force recommends the establishment of "centers of pedagogy" which would not necessarily be housed in schools or colleges of education.

The idea of collaboration between schools and universities is a common topic of concern at many levels. A U.S. Department of Edcuation conference held in December of 1990 featured 24 speakers

who addressed the need to improve teacher education. One thing on which all were in basic agreement was the need for "collaboration among all educational agencies in restructuring and redesigning schools and teacher education simultaneously" (Fisher, 1991, p.1). Yet there is little information to suggest that much has been done along these lines to date.

Many research reports fail to mention the effect of such collaborative efforts on life in classrooms. Do these projects make life better for students and teachers? Do students achieve more success, improve their self-esteem, become productive members of the school community? Do teachers feel better about teaching? Do they enjoy coming to school each day? Are they swept up in a rich, instructional life in school? Or do things continue on as usual for the major participants in the school culture? Is change only cosmetic or superficial rather than deep and meaningful? And what about the university personnel involved in the collaboration? Have their professional lives been transformed in any meaningful way? Or do they still view themselves as imparters of knowledge rather than participants in a meaningful dialogue? These and other questions have not been adequately addressed, although we do have some tantalizing hints that some possibilities for these kinds of results do exist.

Why Collaboration has Been Unsuccessful in the Past

A review of the literature leaves us with the question of why so much intensive effort at implementing collaborative efforts

between schools and universities has as yet had so little reported impact on the very people schools are designed for - students in the classrooms around the country, and in particular, students in at-risk situations. In many cases, collaborative efforts have suffered from a lack of specificity - the structural and support mechanisms to facilitate change and collaboration have not been built into programs, so they quickly resort back to the "status quo", or business as usual. In other instances, change is superficial and does not bring about the "rich professional dialogue" which Goodlad (1984) says is crucial to collaboration.

Collaboration between schools and universities means changing the very culture of each since the existing cultures do not facilitate collaboration. Roles become ambiguous and the costs of change often outwiegh the benefits to the participants (Fullan, 1991). As Huberman (1990), cited in Fullan, 1991, states, intense collaboration does not automatically bring about changes in classrooms. It may, in fact, interfere with teachers' work in classrooms by using up large amounts of time that could be used for instructional planning and implementation. Many projects also fail to build on knowledge gained from role theory and the theories of organizational learning and the power these theories have to explain behavior in schools and universities undergoing change (Clift, et al, 1990).

In summary, then, university-school collaboration holds promise which has not as yet been fully realized. There are many obstacles, such as non-supportive cultures, role conflict, lack of time for

dialogue, and costs versus benefits, which must be identified and dealt with before success can occur. There are theory and research out there which can guide these efforts. There are also rich descriptions of previous efforts from which we can draw meaningful conclusions.

Why Collaborate?

In view of the lack of consistent success in previous attempts at school-university collaboration, one might ask why the Accelerated Schools Project is attempting yet another collaborative venture. The literature is clear in pointing out that meaningful change does not occur in a top-down model of implementation. Those people who are the major players must be empowered to make decisions regarding the changes taking place. It also becomes clear that universities and colleges of education have much to learn from the people in the trenches - those teachers in our nation's public and private schools. If change is to become part of the culture, then those charged with implementing the change at both the university and school levels, must become empowered participants. Unless the preparation of teachers is transformed at the same time that our nation's schools are transformed, new teachers and administrators will be unable to function effectively in restructured schools. Collaboration with a shared vision of what schools should be seems to hold promise for deep, meaningful change in school and university culture. Each would build on the strengths of the other and each would be transformed by their interaction with the other. We

believe the situation is critical enough for increasing numbers of our nation's children that the effort is worth the undertaking.

The Accelerated Schools Satellite Center Project

The development of the Accelerated Schools Satellite Center Project was a response to the rapid growth of requests for assistance from schools wishing to transform themselves into Accelerated Schools as well as a response to the recent research on change and collaborative efforts between universities and schools. In order for the Accelerated Schools movement to continue to grow, Stanford realized that capacity for implementation and facilitation needed to be developed and nurtured at other sites. Building on lessons learned from other models of acceleration, the Satellite Center Project was designed.

What is a Satellite Center?

A Satellite Center is a school or college of education which prepares a large number of teachers and administrators for work in schools with high percentages of students in at-risk situations. The school or college of education has entered into an agreement with Stanford University to become a center for Accelerated Schools in their own particular geographic area. A carefully detailed contract is entered into by both Stanford and the Satellite Center. This contract describes the duties and responsibilities of all involved in the endeavor. Some of these duties and responsibilities will be described at length in the following sections. The intitial paragraph

of the agreement states, "This Satellite Center will be responsible for establishing a knowledge of and capacity for initiating and supporting accelerated schools for at-risk students in its local school district and to spread this capacity to schools in districts in surrounding areas. The Stanford staff will work with the Satellite Centers to build this capacity and all activities will be geared to that end" (Agreement With Satellite Centers, 1990).

Why a Satellite Center Approach?

We designed the Satellite Center approach to Accelerated Schools for a number of reasons. Prominent among these was the desire to get leverage by establishing local capacity and advocacy that would be far more effective with school systems in a specific locality than would be a program operating out of a single national site. We also wanted to try to provide the conditions and incentives for teacher and administrator training programs to transform their activities in conjunction with the hands-on transformation of the schools they would be working with.

The Design of the Model

With funding from Chevron for a term of three years, the project was designed so that Stanford University would serve as a training and facilitation center for four University Satellite Centers housed in colleges and schools of education around the country. Stanford would serve as a clearing house for the Accelerated Schools Project and provide a research agenda as well as facilitating networking by publishing a quarterly national Accelerated Schools newsletter.

Stanford would also serve as a center for training and would change its own programs of teacher and administrator preparation so as to facilitate the capacity building process and to prepare teachers and administrators to work successfully in Accelerated Schools.

Universities selected for the project were San Francisco State University, the University of New Orleans, California State University at Los Angeles, and Texas A&M University. These sites were selected because of their location in urban areas which serve large numbers of at-risk school children and because the institutions themselves prepare large numbers of teachers and administrators to work in these urban settings with high percentages of at-risk children and because they were in areas where a large Chevron presence existed. Chevron felt that they should give something back to the communities in which they did business. Chevron also intended for their employees in each location to become personally involved with the local accelerated school.

Each Satellite Center went through a collaborative process with the local school district to select one elementary school to serve as the pilot school for the project. The selection processes differed from center to center depending on the contacts with and practices of the local district. One site required that schools submit applications and go through a formal selection process. Other sites were recommended by the school district central office for a variety of reasons. Satellite Centers clarified the purpose of the project with district personnel and stressed the need for active central office

support from the district. This support could include providing waivers of district policies which would inhibit the operation of the Accelerated School, help in finding information or creating data bases, provision of guidance in alternative assessment techniques, and membership on school site task forces. At least one central office member was expected to attend the training session held for the pilot school in the fall.

The Satellite Center Project has a number of objectives (Satellite Center Agreement, 1990) which may be grouped together into three major goals. The first goal of the project is for the Satellite Centers to become the focus for Accelerated Schools training, evaluation and facilitation in their geographic area. They will serve as a vehicle for implementation for many different educational entities desiring to participate in the Accelerated Schools Project. They are expected to provide a forum for the promotion and understanding of accelerated schools through the sponsorship of and participation in conferences and the production of and contribution to publications. Accordingly, Satellite Centers are also expected to revise their teacher education programs to include the Accelerated Schools principles and processes in the curriculum in meaningful ways and to place student observers, student teachers, and administrative interns into the Accelerated Schools they are working with.

Secondly, each Satellite Center will work intensively with one pilot elementary school in their region. This school will serve as a model school for others in the district which are interested in becoming part of the project. It is intended that the faculty from these model schools, together with the Satellite Center personnel, will provide training and support for new schools and provide technical assistance to them as they in turn transform themselves into Accelerated Schools. Thus the capacity building taking place at the Satellite Centers provides a strong base for future dissemination and training. Teachers and administrators going through the University educational preparation programs also become empowered to become change agents for their own schools, capable of initiating and facilitating the process in their own schools and districts.

And finally, Satellite Centers are also expected to establish a collaborative research and development program with their schools to advance an understanding of Accelerated School theory and implications. They will help develop evaluation and assessment models. They will design and implement, with the advice and consultation of the Stanford Center, a plan for formative and summative evaluation of their projects.

A number of activities and training opportunities have been developed to facilitate the achievement of the Satellite Center goals and objectives. Some of these are detailed in the section on implementation. Satellite Center Directors will come together for

meetings at least once a year to share experiences and ideas and to plan for the future.

The Stanford Center provides general assistance to the Satellite Centers in terms of visits by the Director to schools and University Satellite Centers. Satellite Centers submit quarterly reports on their progress to Stanford and receive feedback from the Stanford team. They have also completed a mid-year reflection and will engage in a summative session with the Stanford Director at the end of the first year of operation.

Implementation of the Model

Satellite Center directors and staff attended several training sessions at Stanford before the initiation of the project with the public schools. A one day workshop in December, 1989 , held on the Stanford campus, introduced all the directors to each other and to the Stanford staff. It also provided them with an overview of the Accelerated Schools process and principles and readings to take home with them.

This training was followed up by a more intensive training session for Satellite Center directors and staff, deans of education at their institutions, and elementary school principals from the newly selected pilot schools. One school also sent a teacher to the training. This intensive training immersed participants in the process and led them through a training program similar to the one they would offer to the pilot schools in the fall of the coming school

year. Training materials were provided as well as opportunities to interact with each other and the materials in a meaningful way. Feedback was solicited in order to improve training.

Satellite Center directors then returned home to begin to prepare for their own fall training in the pilot schools. The Stanford Satellite Center Director worked closely with all centers to help them develop training that was appropriate for their particular sites and yet encompassed all the important elements of the Accelerated Schools philosophy, principles, and process (For more information, see Levin, 1986, 1987, 1988, and Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991). Materials were prepared, exercises were developed which provided for interactive learning, schedules and facilities arrangements were worked out, and all the centers proceeded to participate in training in the fall of 1990.

Dr. Henry Levin, Director of the Accelerated Schools Project at Stanford, and Dr. Jane McCarthy, Director of the Satellite Center Project at Stanford, attended all training sessions and were active participants, although the bulk of the training was delivered by Satellite Center personnel so as to forge close relationships with the elementary school faculty and administrators.

Once initial training, lasting in length from 3-5 days, was completed, Satellite Center personnel and school personnel began to implement the initial stages of the process that was to radically restructure curriculum, instruction, and organization in the schools.

Follow-up sessions on different aspects of the process were offered by Satellite Directors. All personnel in the schools had participated in more than 40 hours of training by January.

In addition to developing close collaborative relationships with the elementary schools, Satellite Center personnel are expected to be a regular presence in the school. Their task is to build the capacity of the members of the school community to engage in the accelerated process. To this end, Satellite Center team members attend meetings, observe in classrooms, participate in special events, and become a valued part of the school. Some Satellite members have provided release time for teachers to meet by taking over their classes at specific times. Others have helped schools establish Accelerated Schools newsletters to help keep all faculty and staff aware of and informed about the progress of the different task forces. Retreats, special luncheons, seminars, classroom observations, demonstration teaching, evaluation and research, and general support and encouragement have been provided to the schools by the Satellite Centers. These services were not offered in a piecemeal fashion, but rather were decided upon as an outgrowth of the inquiry process at the school where needs were identified and solutions proposed and tested. All activities are designed to help move the school closer to its vision - the academic and personal success of all students in the school.

Mid-Year Progress Report

The challenges

Our Satellite Centers have experienced some of the same problems documented in the literature. They have enountered school and university cultures which do not facilitate collaboration. They have encountered teacher concerns about the costs versus the benefits of such radical change in their institutions. They have had to work with a crippling teacher strike and address the issue of rebuilding teacher morale and cohesiveness before continuing on with the project. They have met with instances of administrator resistance and attempts to preserve the status quo.

One roadblock which the Stanford team has encountered has been the fact that it is easy to get institutions of higher learning to pay lip service to the principles of the Accelerated Schools project. However, it is much more difficult to get them to provide the suuport and facilitation necessary for their very dedicated Satellite Center Directors and staff to do their jobs effectively and efficiently. The whole issue of faculty reward systems, release time, and embracing the project as an integral part of the teacher preparation program rather than as one more project added on at the periphery are all being confronted and addressed in this first year. It would appear that it is easier for institutions to provide release time from courses than it is to set out an overall strategy to create a comprehensive center for Accelerated Schools. The culture of the institution must change before the Satellite Centers can become

regional centers with the capacity to reach out to school districts and provide them with the assistance they need to create Accelerated Schools and in which there are powerful implications for teacher and administrator training. We are currently exploring ways in which we at Stanford can help facilitate this process of change at each Center. We believe that funding issues can be solved once the transformation of culture occurs.

We have also learned that the Satellite Center teams need support and guidance in each stage of the process of acceleration as they work through it for the first time themselves. We have learned the value of networking and enabling Center personnel to visit other sites and other Accelerated Schools. Such visits served to excite and challenge the participants.

The successes

Change can already be seen in classrooms in the new Accelerated Schools. Winter break seemed to be a turning point for many of the schools - things seemed to happen very quickly after that and people began to feel that they really could successfully implement the process. A network of Accelerated Schools Principals has been established and quarterly meetings are being held at which specific issues are addressed and common problems and successes are shared.

The relationship between Stanford and the Satellite Centers is generally a positive one as we grapple with the issues of

expectations and responsibilities on both sides. Regular communication and visits to the sites by the Director keep all parties informed on a regular basis. The first issue of the newsletter was published and was met with a positive response. Organized efforts at both qualitative and quantitative data collection have been designed and are being carried out. And most importantly, both Stanford and the Satellite Centers are learning more about the process of implementation and collaboration with each other.

The Satellite Center staff members are beginning to participate in regional and national conferences, to give speeches and workshops locally and throughout the state, and to provide limited assistance to new schools desiring to initiate the Accelerated Schools Process. Center members will be actively involved in Accelerated Schools training projects this summer.

Will It Work?

The Satellite Center Project is unique and untried. It differs from the professional development center in that it seeks to establish both university and school centers simultaneously in a collaborative enterprise. Most previous collaborative school-university projects have not led to a dramatic transformation of the university itself as a result of interaction with the public school. This project is attempting to find out whether in fact schools can transform universities and their teacher and administrative preparation

programs. Will school experiences and collaborative efforts change university programs? Or will the Accelerated Schools Project be just another add-on to the status quo? What will happen to the Centers when the funding runs out?

Our Satellite Centers and pilot schools are beginning to work together in new and unfamiliar ways. Differing role expectations, culture clashes, confusion, and all the other problems associated with change are being experienced and dealt with. Initial results, however, look promising. The pilot schools are busy performing the tasks necessary to take stock and set goals and priorities. Task forces are being established, teachers are meeting and talking, and some changes can already be seen in classrooms. The support provided by the Satellite Center teams seems to be facilitating the process of change. The University teams appear to be growing in expertise and knowledge as they work with school communities to meet the challenge of restructuring schools so that all students can be successful learners and the strengths of all members of the school community are utilized. And we at Stanford are also learning how to best work with Satellite Centers and facilitate their success through our hands-on activities this year. We are hopeful that the next two years of the project will build on the lessons learned from the first year.

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